

Meeting Date: September 25, 2013

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## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT September 25, 2013

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### PROGRAM UPDATE

#### *Ecosystem Restoration*

Delta Restoration Network: The Delta Restoration Network (DRN) met on June 25, 2013 to discuss coordination of the multiple science efforts in the Delta. Dr. Peter Goodwin, lead scientist for the Delta Science Program provided an overview of the recently released Draft Delta Science Plan. Other presentations included overviews of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) adaptive management plan, the Interagency Ecological Program and the San Francisco Estuary Institute programs.

The next meeting of the DRN will be held in mid September and will include an overview of the Fishery Agency Strategy Team (FAST); an update on the recently awarded grant to improve restoration project tracking capabilities; an overview of pilot efforts to support data management, collaboration and synthesis; and a discussion on the development of a Restoration Framework to help ensure coordinated, integrated and locally informed ecosystem restoration in the Delta.

The Conservancy was awarded an EPA Wetland Program Development Grant for \$254,119 for the project, *"Enhancing Regional Capacity for Wetland Project Tracking, Assessment and Reporting."* The grant agreement is being finalized and the project will commence on *October 1, 2013*

Habitat Enhancement of Working Landscapes: The Conservancy is facilitating a workgroup consisting of Resource Conservation Districts in the Delta, Ducks Unlimited, DPC, The Nature Conservancy, Audubon, and Point Blue Conservation Science. The group is working to define a locally supported habitat enhancement program for the Delta, starting with the development of a framework for the habitat enhancement of working landscapes. This group will meet quarterly to share information and coordinate activities where appropriate.

Channel Margin Habitat Enhancement: The Conservancy is collaborating with Department of Water Resources (DWR), Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (US FWS), and the National Marine Fisheries Service to explore opportunities for channel margin habitat enhancement in the Delta. The Conservancy continues to work with our partners to develop a framework for enhancing channel margin habitat. Staff is reviewing current fish population distribution data for the Delta and getting input on design characteristics for effective channel margin habitat for target species.

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Delta Arundo Control and Restoration Program: The Conservancy is working with its partners, Sonoma Ecology Center and Solano Resource Conservation District to develop a scope of work. With a scope in place, DWR's Delta Levee Program will initiate the approval for a final authorization to fund the first phase of this program.

### ***Economic Development***

Delta Farmbudsman: Conservancy staff is researching the feasibility of developing a Farmbudsman position for the Delta. Meetings with local farmers, agricultural commissioners, and Cooperative Extension officers have identified the need for increased help in navigating the multiple county, state, and federal regulations in the Delta. Staff has also met with the Yolo/Solano Farmbudsman and Ombudsmen working in Marin and Sonoma counties to learn more about the day-to-day work of the Farmbudsman, workload, and the long-term viability of the position. Conservancy staff is developing a white paper outlining next steps, logistics, and funding options and will be scheduling meetings to discuss this idea more fully with the Delta counties, farm bureaus, and other stakeholders.

Coordination with CSUS for Delta History Program: The Conservancy and the Delta Protection Commission (DPC) are in discussions with California State University Sacramento's (CSUS) Public History Program to develop projects and internships for public history students that focus on Delta history. Potential opportunities include the development of a compendium of Delta history; assistance with national registry nominations; development of a historical driving tour and app; and an oral history project. Staff are continuing to meet with CSUS faculty to further develop this partnership.

McCormack Williamson Recreation Proposal & Coordination: University of California Davis' (UCD) Landscape Architecture Department submitted a letter of intent (LOI) on July 26<sup>th</sup> to the UCD's internal Agricultural and Natural Resources Competitive Grant Program. The letter of intent outlined a multi-year program to support faculty and student involvement in the development of a recreation plan for the McCormack-Williamson Tract. UCD's Watershed Sciences Program, the DPC, and State Parks are project partners. By partnering with other state agencies, non-profits, and universities, the Conservancy anticipates resources for comprehensive recreation planning for McCormack-Williamson and the surrounding areas. A request for full proposals was released on August 20, 2013 and although the LOI was not accepted for a full proposal, the Conservancy is continuing to meet with UCD to identify how best to move forward.

Delta Branding: The Conservancy initially applied for an \$80,000 grant from the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) to assist in the Delta Branding Project. Upon review of the Conservancy's application, EDA staff asked the Conservancy to increase the requested amount to more fully support the project. The Conservancy received notification that it will be receiving \$197,500 to support the hire of a consultant to assist in developing a community-based tourism infrastructure to manage Delta marketing long-term; provide guidance to the new tourism infrastructure for one year; develop a marketing plan; and fund marketing activities. Grant awards are expected in late September 2013.

The Conservancy also submitted a \$25,000 grant to PG&E's Economic Vitality Grant Program for the Delta Branding Project. Grant awardees will be notified in early September 2013. Partnering with the DPC, the Conservancy has initiated the Delta Branding Project. The DPC has contracted with a marketing consultant to develop a Delta brand, tagline, colors, and a brand handbook.

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### *Education and Outreach*

Delta Dialogues: The Conservancy received \$250,000 in grants to conduct the Delta Dialogues through October 2013; the contract with the consultants was signed in June. The Delta Dialogues met on July 26<sup>th</sup> and August 23<sup>rd</sup>. The July 26, 2013 meeting focused on how to improve the BDCP governance structure to include in-Delta voices. Building upon the conversations that took place in July, the group took a brief step-back at the August meeting to deepen their shared understanding from varying perspectives about the advantages and disadvantages of an isolated conveyance facility; how to participate in the State Water Resources Control Board's water flow and water rights hearings; and how to incorporate in-Delta voices in Delta governance decisions.

Staff continues to seek additional funding for the Delta Dialogues. Letters of Inquiry (LOI) to the Garfield Foundation and to the James Irvine Foundation were submitted in July and August, respectively. If accepted, these grants could bring in as much as \$1 million to the Delta Dialogues.

Delta Waterway Cleanup: The Fall cleanup will be Saturday, September 21, 2013. Partnering with Sacramento County Regional Parks and Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, the Conservancy will host two sites at Lower Morrison Creek, near Freeport. Partnering with Brannan-Andrus Levee Maintenance District, the Conservancy will also host a site on Brannan Island near Rio Vista, about 1.5 miles south of Highway 12. The Conservancy is also partnering with Bridgestone America's One Team, One Planet's tire recycling program to offer Delta landowners an opportunity to bring illegally dumped tires to a tire recycling point. The Conservancy is using the Delta Waterways Cleanup as an opportunity to provide environmental education to Clarksburg Scout Troop 85; Birds of Prey—a non-profit birding organization-- will discuss how trash left in water harms birds and other wildlife.

Community Training Program: The Conservancy will host a two-day "Developing Powerful Grant Proposals Workshop" on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> at the Conservancy's office. The course will discuss critical elements in persuasive proposal writing and discuss strategies for approaching funding sources. It is provided in partnership with the Nonprofit Resource Center and free for Delta residents, businesses, and non-profits.

Rose Foundation Letter of Inquiry: The Conservancy partnered with Friends of Marsh Creek Watershed to submit a LOI requesting \$25,000 from the Rose Foundation to support a Citizen Water Monitoring Program in the Delta. Funding decisions are made in November.

### **CONSERVANCY BUDGET UPDATE**

Update on Conservancy Budget Reporting Process.

### **OUTREACH – DELTA MEETING MATRIX**

An attached meeting matrix summarizes the most recent events and lists the key dates of future meetings.

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